

SECURE COMMONWEALTH PANEL

April 22, 2009

Mullins National Guard Armory, Sandston

Attendance: Bruce Benson, Paula Burnette, Eric Casey, Bob Crouch, Kay Goss, Alleyn Harned, Tom Hennessey, Kelly Hobbs, Jim Horton, Algie Howell, Cathie Hutchins, Ron Keys, John Knapp, Greg Lucyk, John Marshall, Marcus Martin, John McDonald, Leigh Middleditch, Mike Neuhard, John O'Bannon, Karen Remley, Jeff Rezin, Norris Royston, Jack Sawicki, Beverly Sherwood, and Henry Stanley.

Welcoming Remarks – Bob Crouch, Chairman

Mr. Crouch opened the meeting by introducing two new members of the panel. John McDonald, the newly appointed Deputy Secretary of Technology and Dr. Tom Hennessey, the Chief of Staff for George Mason University.

Mr. Crouch recognized the Adjutant General, Robert B. Newman, Jr. and thanked him for his hospitality.

Department of Military Affairs Remarks – General Robert B. Newman, Jr.

General Newman welcomed the panel to the Mullins Armory and gave a brief background on the Armory's name. Lieutenant Colonel Thornton Mullins, Commander of the 111th Field Artillery Battalion, led the first wave on to Omaha Beach and had heavy casualties. Colonel Mullins proclaimed "To Hell with our artillery mission, we're infantrymen now!" Unfortunately, soon after the Colonel was killed by a German sniper. Colonel Mullins was awarded the Silver Star for his bravery.

The Virginia National Guard presence extends throughout Virginia, which is vitally important when a disaster occurs and the Guard needs to respond quickly. The General noted his pride in the Guard's performance during the Presidential Inauguration.

General Newman gave an overview of the Guard's mission and goals. Please see slides.

Economic Stimulus Overview – Barbara Reese, Governor's Office

Virginia is the first state to implement the Recovery Act. It is a complicated process that is moving fast.

The three main areas within the stimulus package include: (1) Tax relief – funding for individual citizens. (2) Competitive grants – the Commonwealth will apply and compete with other states for grant funding. (3) Virginia received \$4.8 billion directly. The Governor is responsible for how this money is appropriated.

Ms. Reese reviewed her slides.

A question was asked about the challenges. Ms. Reese noted that the transparency and accountability issues are a major challenge. The first reporting date back to the Office of

Management and Budget is in July and no instructions or guidance has been issued regarding reporting requirements. Virginia is the best managed state in the country and we have standards in place to see us through the accountability issues. There is some worry about the small community action agencies who might be overwhelmed with the paperwork and reporting requirements.

The Commonwealth does not publish information on Stimulus.Gov unless it is official.

Billy Shelton mentioned that in the Recovery Act, funding is available to construct/update fire stations. There is an estimated \$200 million dollars for this initiative. Each state may get \$4.8 million of this funding; unfortunately, this amount will not go far in construction costs.

Virginia Interoperability Picture for Emergency Response – Chris McIntosh and Bobbi Atristain, Department of Emergency Management

The Virginia Interoperability Picture for Emergency Response (VIPER) will allow the Virginia Emergency Operations Center to display information that relates to each other spatially in order to drastically improve the situational awareness of response and recovery events. The system can ingest information from disparate systems, such as WebEOC, Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD), and the National Weather Service and display it through a GIS interface.

Mr. McIntosh and Ms. Atristain demonstrated VIPER.

Tour

The Secure Commonwealth Panel members and other meeting participants took a tour of the Mullins Armory Joint Operations Center.

2009 General Assembly Update – Marc Follmer, Office of Commonwealth Preparedness

Mr. Follmer reviewed legislation relevant to the Secure Commonwealth Panel work. Please see handout.

Ready Virginia Update – Bob Spieldenner, Department of Emergency Management

Mr. Spieldenner noted that the Ready Virginia campaign was moving along well with several upcoming opportunities to promote preparedness initiatives in the Commonwealth.

Out of all the campaigns in Ready Virginia, the Winter Campaign is a smaller outreach effort. The Department of Emergency Management works closely with the Department of Transportation, Virginia State Police, Department of Social Services, Department of Health, and the National Weather Service on a coordinated message to the public on winter preparedness.

Several news releases were issued on winter preparedness highlighting helpful safety tips. This year, the winter was mild, but when a storm occurred it gave the Department of

Emergency Management an opportunity to promote the importance of winter preparedness to the public.

The *Code of Virginia* dictates public schools conduct drills once a year to train children on proper safety procedures should a tornado touch down in the vicinity of a school. Most schools usually perform this drill on Tornado Preparedness Day. This is the first year that outreach extended to the home school associations. Registrations for tornado drill participation reached up to 450,000; however, more businesses and military installations were participating who did not register and could have bolster numbers upward 50,000.

A suggestion was heard from the panel to be more active next year in pushing the message out on Tornado Preparedness Day to the judiciary branch of government.

Mr. Spieldenner continued his update and noted that this year the higher education community is showing more interest with 15 colleges/universities registered to participate for this year's tornado drill. Higher education institutes also took this opportunity to test their text/paging systems.

The Virginia Department of Emergency Management is forging new relationships and increasing media outreach especially with the television meteorologists on tornado preparedness activities.

The annual sales tax holiday established by the General Assembly to ease the cost of creating an emergency supply kit is scheduled from May 25 through May 31. During this time, the purchase of certain items is exempt from the Commonwealth's sales and use taxes. Customers may use manufacturer's coupons to lower the price of an item so that it will qualify for the \$60 or \$1,000 price cap. Items include bottled water, flashlights, battery-powered radios, batteries and first aid kits. Frequently asked questions, media kit and links to the Virginia Department of Taxation's complete list of tax-exempt items are available online at www.readyvirginia.gov.

Last year promotion for the tax free holiday was low, so more outreach efforts have been planned this year to get the word out to the public. This year businesses, financial institutions, chambers of commerce have been contacted and will be providing the public with information on this event by various means.

Another exciting initiative is the new relationship with Radio Disney, which covers the Hampton Roads and Richmond areas. This is a great way to reach the parents about upcoming community events, promotions, etc. and become more involved.

It was suggested that the legislators on the panel assist in tweaking the legislation for the tax free holiday so it can be held during the same time as Hurricane Preparedness Week. Currently, Hurricane Preparedness Week changes year to year and unfortunately this year the tax free holiday does not fall on those dates.

The General Assembly did approve of commemorating Hurricane Camille on August 20. August is the height of hurricane season. Hurricane Camille went through Virginia 40 years ago killing 150 people in 1969. This will be a good opportunity to show the public why it is so important to be prepared for hurricane season.

The Department of Emergency Management took the panel's recommendation on contacting Asian Chambers of Commerce and low income organizations (Goodwill) to work closer with them on preparedness initiatives.

Work is beginning on efforts for September - Preparedness Month. New brochures are being developed and others are being updated. If you would like any brochures, please contact the Office of Commonwealth Preparedness.

Outreach Sub Panel Report – Greg Lucyk

Outreach efforts are moving along with success. The Sub Panel was able to provide a workshop at this year's Virginia Emergency Management Conference entitled "Emergency Planning and Preparedness for Special Needs Persons: What Every Emergency Manager Needs to Know." The program highlighted the Sub Panel's work of monitoring emergency preparedness for special needs populations in the Commonwealth. It was well attended and Mr. Lucyk thanked all who were involved.

Mr. Lucyk introduced Kay Goss to give the Education Working Group report. Please see handout. The working group's next meeting is scheduled for May 13 with a formal report to the panel at their summer meeting.

Business and Industry Sub Panel Report – Leigh Middleditch and Marc Follmer

Business Credentialing is a web based system that will be managed by the Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC). Once the disaster occurs and the recovery begins, the VEOC can unlock the system and allow the locality to begin using it and producing a uniform credential used statewide to allow businesses back into the disaster zones to begin the recovery effort. Mr. Follmer showed slides on this system and a picture of the final product, a mock credential.

The credential authorization will have the

- Incident Name
- Incident ID # (this will change with every new event)
- Designated Image (this will change with every new event)
- Credentials to Issue
- ID Layout
- Expiration Date (14 days is the default date, but the date is set at the discretion of the VEOC).

The issue number will be a combination of digits in your driver's license number that are scrambled in a pre-set order. So the security checkpoint will look at your driver's license number and match it with the number on your credential.

The Sub Panel is working closely with first responders and has received several endorsements of this system (Virginia State Police). This is not a mandatory system for local governments; it is up to their discretion on the use.

The Sub Panel also is interacting with the First Responder Sub Panel on this project and will work closely with them as it progresses.

The Education Task Force has been concentrating on developing an interactive website to assist small business continuity planning. The Task Force has been working with Dr. Jason Levy of VCU and his homeland security class on questions for the interactive website that will help small businesses produce a continuity plan.

Mr. Follmer reviewed screen shots of the Business Continuity Plan website.

Critical Infrastructure Protection Sub Panel Report – John Knapp

Mr. Knapp reviewed the progress of the Virginia Critical Infrastructure Protection and Resiliency Strategic Plan implementation. Please see slides.

First Responder Sub Panel Report – Henry Stanley

Colonel Stanley provided an update. Please see slides.

Health and Medical Sub Panel Report – Dr. Karen Remley

In December, the Department of Health will introduce a pilot program on alternate standards of care and alternate care facilities.

The next meeting of the Sub Panel will be May 13.

The Department of Health played a key role in the Presidential Inauguration in the public health sector. They will complete their own After Action Report.

The Sub Panel will continue its work on clinician outreach and providing emergency information to them for their patients.

Hopefully by the next meeting, the Centers for Disease Control will announce their grant guidance including hospital preparedness program grants.

Department of Homeland Security 2009 Grants Update – Cheryl Adkins, Department of Emergency Management

Ms. Adkins reviewed the grant process and discussed grant investments. Please see slides.

Virginia Fusion Center – Captain Steve Lambert and Lieutenant Lehew Miller, Virginia State Police

Lieutenant Miller provided an overview of the Virginia Fusion Center. Please see slides.

Closing – Bob Crouch

Mr. Crouch thanked all for their participation. The next meeting will be this summer at the new Armory in Winchester.